

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for treatment of a heart comprising the steps of:  
2 forming a penetration through a muscular wall of the heart into an interior  
3 chamber thereof;  
4 positioning a distal end of an elongated ablating device having an elongated  
5 ablating surface through the penetration; and  
6 contacting the elongated ablating surface of the ablating device with a first  
7 selected portion of an interior surface of the muscular wall for transmural ablation  
8 thereof.

1 2. The method of claim 1 further including the step of:  
2 manipulating the device through said penetration to strategically contact the  
3 elongated ablating surface with a second selected portion of the interior surface of the  
4 muscular wall for transmural ablation thereof.

1 3. The method of claim 1 further including the steps of:  
2 repeating the forming, positioning and contacting steps to form a  
3 plurality of strategically positioned lesions.

1 4. The method of claim 3 wherein,  
2 the lesions are formed to create a predetermined conduction pathway in the  
3 muscular wall.

1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein,  
2 the interior chamber is selected from a right atrium and a left atrium.

1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein,  
2 the ablating surface is disposed at an angle of at most about 90 degrees relative  
3 to the longitudinal axis of the shaft.

1 7. The method of claim 1 further including the step of:  
2 forming a hemostatic seal between the device and the penetration to inhibit  
3 blood loss through the penetration.

1           8.       The method of claim 7 wherein:  
2           the seal forming step is carried out by placing a purse-string suture in the  
3           muscular wall of the heart around the penetration.

1           9.       The method of claim 1 wherein,  
2           the heart remains beating throughout the forming, positioning, and  
3           contacting steps.

1           10.      The method of claim 1 further including the step of:  
2           arresting the patient's heart.

1           11.      The method of claim 10 wherein,  
2           the arresting step is performed by endovascularly occluding the ascending  
3           aorta.

1           12.      The method of claim 1 wherein,  
2           the ablating device is a radiofrequency probe.

1           13.      The method of claim 1 wherein,  
2           the ablating device is a laser probe.

1           14.      The method of claim 1 wherein,  
2           the ablating device is a microwave probe.

1           15.      The method of claim 1 wherein,  
2           the ablating device is a fluid delivery probe.

1           16.      A method for ablating medically refractory atrial fibrillation of the  
2           heart comprising the steps of:  
3           forming a penetration through a wall of the heart;  
4           positioning a distal end of an ablating device having an elongated ablating  
5           surface through the penetration;  
6           forming a hemostatic seal between the ablating device and the penetration to  
7           inhibit blood loss therethrough;

8 contacting the elongated ablating surface with at least one selected portion of  
9 an interior surface of the heart for transmural ablation thereof to form at least one  
10 elongated transmural lesion.

1 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of:  
2 repeating the forming, positioning, and contacting steps to form a plurality of  
3 lesions, the plurality of lesions cooperating to generally form a conduction pathway  
4 between the sinoatrial node and the atrioventricular node.

1 18. The method of claim 16 wherein,  
2 the interior chamber is selected from a right atrium and a left atrium.

1 19. The method of claim 16, wherein at least one hemostatic seal is formed  
2 by tightening a purse-string suture in the heart wall around the respective penetration.

1 20. A system for transmurally ablating heart tissue in a body cavity  
2 surrounded by a chest wall comprising:  
3 a probe having an elongated shaft positionable through the chest wall and into  
4 a penetration extending through a wall of the patient's heart, said shaft having a  
5 substantially elongated ablating surface proximate a distal end thereof for  
6 manipulative contact with at least one selected surface of the wall of the heart for  
7 transmural ablation thereof; and  
8 a sealing device fixable to the heart tissue around said penetration for forming  
9 a hemostatic seal around the shaft and the transmural penetration to inhibit blood loss  
10 therebetween.

add  
B<sub>1</sub>  
add  
C<sub>1</sub>